

By this amendment, Applicants have cancelled the claims 15-23 introduced in the earlier amendment and request entry of new claims 24-28 reading on the elected invention.

The Official Action dated October 25, 2000, the Examiner rejected claims 1,2,5,8 under 35 USC 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Watanabe et al. or anticipated by Komatsu. The Examiner also rejected claims 10 and 14 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe et al. or Kamatsu in view of Koshkarian.


Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's conclusion that the cited references disclose all the limitations of Applicants' present invention. Applicants' maintain that neither Watanabe nor Komatsu teach or disclose the claimed invention. In particular, neither reference teaches a **"thin film coating having a thickness sufficient to enhance the corrosion resistance characteristics of such engine component without significantly affecting the thermal characteristics of the engine component."**

As specifically taught in Applicants specification, **"Preferably, the coating 10 has a thickness in the range of about 1.0 and 5.0 microns. Thickness less than about 1.0 micron is undesirable because the coating may not be sufficiently dense to seal the silicon-based ceramic tip from the combustion environment, and thickness greater than about 5.0 microns is undesirable because such coatings would have high thermal stresses and act as a thermal barrier ..."** (See page 6, lines 12-20).

It is clear from the description of the Wantanabe and Komatsu references that each is concerned with the thermal or mechanical properties of the coated component and have disclosed coatings suitable to optimize such properties. More particularly, watanabe is concerned with the thermal stability of the component and therefore teaches coatings having a thickness of 5 to 100 microns. Likewise, Komatsu is mainly concerned with the mechanical strength of the coated component and has thus taught a (preferred) thickness of 5 to 50 microns. Neither reference teaches coatings of 5 microns or less for the purpose of improving corrosion resistance of an engine component, which is subjected to highly corrosive environments.

Based on the foregoing, it is believed that claims 24-28 patentably distinguish from the Wantanabe et al., Komatsu, and other references cited with this application or any combination thereof. To that end, allowance of the pending claims 24-28 is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added by this amendment and no new fees are required since the number of independent claims and total claims pending after this amendment do not exceed the number previously paid for.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Robert J. Hampsch  
Registration No. 36,155  
Caterpillar Inc.

Telephone: 309/675-5214  
RJH:KSW